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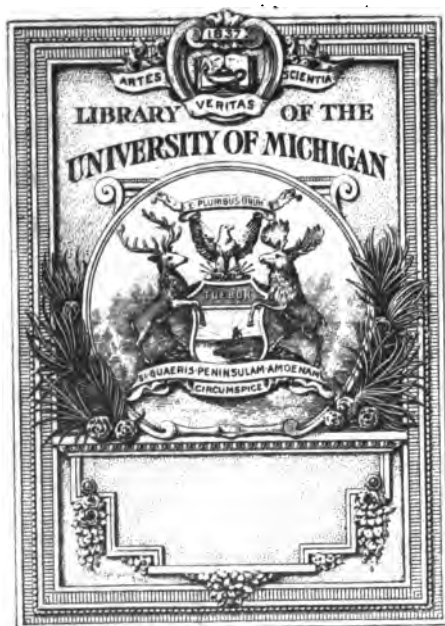
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**A BOOK OF ENGLISH
SONNETS**

**THE
WELLWOOD
BOOKS**

A BOOK OF ENGLISH SONNETS



LONDON: S. WELLWOOD
34 STRAND 1906

TO M. W.

155137



WHAT THE SONNET IS

FOURTEEN small brodered berries on the hem
Of Circe's mantle, each of magic gold;
Fourteen of lone Calypso's tears that roll'd
Into the sea, for pearls to come of them;
Fourteen clear signs of omen in the gem
With which Medea human fate foretold;
Fourteen small drops, which Faustus, growing old,
Craved of the Fiend, to water Life's dry stem.
It is the pure white diamond Dante brought
To Beatrice; its sapphire Laura wore
When Petrarch cut it sparkling out of thought;
The ruby Shakespeare hewed from his heart's core;
The dark, deep emerald that Rossetti wrought
For his own soul, to wear for evermore.

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON.



TO THE READER

THIS anthology has no claim to be other than a personal choice, nor does it aim at an impossible completeness. The criterion of selection has been beauty of diction, together with adequacy of motive. Many striking pieces, of a political nature, or otherwise not "simple and sensuous" have been omitted. Nor has the choice been dominated by any rigid formal theory of the sonnet. Such irregular forms as have justified themselves by their poetic accomplishment have been given a place. The precisian is answered in the spirit of the words of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: "a Shakespearian sonnet is better than the most perfect in form because Shakespeare wrote it." It may be pointed out that this anthology, while it contains fewer sonnets than any recent collections is at the same time wider in its range. The compiler has preferred to err on the side of exclusiveness, and while he cannot pretend to have printed everything of the best, he has endeavoured to include nothing that is not of the best. No doubt the reader will have his favourite sonnets, which he may not always

find in the following pages; but it may be said perhaps without immodesty that the book contains some imperishable poetry, set forth with befitting simplicity.

For permission to print copyright sonnets the Editor tenders his humble thanks to the following authors, publishers, and others: Mr. Hilaire Belloc, Mr. A. C. Benson, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, Mr. Robert Bridges, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. Laurence Housman, Mr. Andrew Lang, Mr. Eugene Lee-Hamilton, Mrs. Meynell, Mr. Ernest Myers, Mr. John Payne, Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Watts-Dunton, Mr. Arthur Symonds, literary executor of Mathilde Blind; Miss Harriet Jay, for sonnets by Robert Buchanan; Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co., for sonnets by W. M. Call, and J. A. Symonds; Messrs. Burns and Oates, for a sonnet by Aubrey De Vere; Mr. John Murray, for sonnets by Julian Fane, excerpted from "Julian Fane: A Memoir," by Lord Lytton, 1871; Mr. Edward Garnett, for the sonnet "Age" by the late Dr. Garnett; Mr. David Nutt, for a sonnet by W. E. Henley; Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co., for the sonnet by Jean Ingelow; Mr. John Lane, for sonnets by Ernest Dowson, Mr. William Watson, and Mr. Le Gallienne; Mrs. Birrell, for "Love, Death and Time" by F. Locker-Lampson; Messrs. Patrick Geddes and Colleagues for the sonnet by "Fiona Macleod"; Mr. Coulson Kernahan, on behalf of Mrs.

Louise Chandler Moulton, literary executrix of Philip Bourke Marston; Mrs. Eveleen Myers, for sonnets by F. W. H. Myers; Messrs. Chatto and Windus for a sonnet by A. W. E. O'Shaughnessy; Messrs. Walter Scott, for sonnets by Mark André Raffalovich; Mr. Fisher Unwin, for sonnets by A. M. F. Robinson; Messrs. Macmillan and Co., for sonnets by Christina Rossetti; Messrs. Ellis for those of Dante Gabriel Rossetti; Mr. Robert Ross, literary executor of Oscar Wilde, and Messrs Methuen and Co., the publishers of Wilde's works.

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The contents of the first part of the book are in chronological order, but the work of nineteenth-century poets is given alphabetically under their names, beginning with Matthew Arnold.

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**A BOOK OF ENGLISH
SONNETS**

SIR THOMAS WYATT

UNSTABLE dream, according to the place,
Be steadfast once, or else at least be true.
By tasted sweetness, make me not to rue
The sudden loss of thy false fained grace.
By good respect in such a dangerous case
Thou brought'st not her into these tossing seas,
But madest my sprite to live my care to increase,
My body in tempest her delight to embrace.
The body dead, the sprite had his desire.
Painless was the one, the other in delight.
Why then, alas, did it not keep it right,
But thus return to leap into the fire,
And where it was at wish, could not remain?
Such mocks of dreams do turn to deadly pain.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

SET me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice:
In temperate heat where he is felt and seen:
In presence prest of people mad or wise.
Set me in high, or yet in low degree:
In longest night, or in the shortest day:
In clearest sky, or where clouds thickest be:
In lusty youth, or when my hairs are grey.
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell,
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood:
Thrall, or at large, alive where so I dwell:
Sick, or in health: in evil fame, or good.
Hers will I be, and only with this thought
Content myself, although my chance be nought.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies,
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What! may it be, that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrow tries?
Sure if that long with love acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
I read it in thy looks; thy languish'd grace
To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there, ungratefulness?

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

MY true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for the other given;
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;
There never was a better bargain driven.
His heart in me keeps me and him in one;
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides;
He loves my heart, for once it was his own;
I cherish his because in me it bides.
His heart his wound receivèd from my sight;
My heart was wounded with his wounded heart:
For as from me on him his hurt did light,
So still methought in me his hurt did smart.
Both equal hurt, in this change sought one bliss:
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

THOMAS WATSON

TIME wasteth years, and months, and hours:
Time doth consume fame, honour, wit and strength:
Time kills the greenest Herbs and sweetest flowers:
Time wears out youth and beauty's looks at length:
Time doth convey to ground both foe and friend,
And each thing else but Love, which hath no end.
Time maketh every tree to die and rot:
Time turneth oft our pleasures into pain:
Time causeth wars and wrongs to be forgot:
Time clears the sky, which first hung full of rain:
Time makes an end of all humane desire,
But only this, which sets my heart on fire.
Time turneth into naught each Princely state:
Time brings a flood from new resolved snow:
Time calms the Sea where tempest was of late:
Time eats whate'er the Moon can see below:
And yet no time prevails in my behove,
Nor any time can make me cease to love.

THOMAS WATSON

YOUTH made a fault through lightness of Belief,
Which fond Belief Love placed in my breast:
But now I find, that Reason gives relief;
And time shows Truth, and Wit that's bought, is best;
Muse not therefore although I change my vein,
He runs too far which never turns again.
Henceforth my mind shall have a watchful eye,
I'll scorn Fond Love, and practice of the same:
The wisdom of my heart shall soon descry
Each thing that's good, from what deserveth blame:
My song shall be; Fortune hath spit her spite,
And Love can hurt no more withal his might.
Therefore all you, to whom my course is known,
Think better comes, and pardon what is past;
I find that all my wildest Oats are sown,
And joy to see, what now I see at last;
And since that Love was cause I trod awry,
I here take off his Bells, and let him fly.

THOMAS WATSON

WHY live I, wretch, and see my joys decay,
Why live I and no hope of love's advancing :
Why do mine eyes behold the sunny day,
Why live I, wretch, in hope of better chancing.
O wherefore tells my tongue this doleful tale,
That every ear may hear my bitter plaint :
Was never heart that yet bemoan'd my bale,
Why live I, wretch, my pangs in vain to paint.
Why strive I 'gainst the stream or 'gainst the hill,
Why are my sorrows buried in the dust :
Why do I toil and lose my labour still,
Why do I feed on hope or build on trust.
Since hope had never hap and trust finds treason,
Why live I, wretch, disdain'd and see no reason?

SAMUEL DANIEL

LOOK, Delia, how we esteem the half-blown rose,
The image of thy blush, and summer's honour!
Whilst yet her tender bud doth undisclose
That full of beauty time bestows upon her.
No sooner spreads her glory in the air,
But straight her wide-blown pomp comes to decline;
She then is scorn'd that late adorn'd the fair:
So fade the roses of those cheeks of thine!
No April can revive thy wither'd flowers,
Whose springing grace adorns thy glory now:
Swift speedy time, feather'd with flying hours,
Dissolves the beauty of the fairest brow.
Then do not thou such treasure waste in vain;
But love now, while thou may'st be loved again.

SAMUEL DANIEL

CARE-CHARMER Sleep, son of the sable night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my languish, and restore the light:
With dark forgetting of my care return,
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow:
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

HENRY CONSTABLE

H OPE, like the hyaena, coming to be old,
Alters his shape; is turned into Despair.
Pity my hoary hopes! Maid of Clear Mould!
Think not that frowns can ever make thee fair!
What harm is it to kiss, to laugh, to play?
Beauty's no blossom, if it be not used.
Sweet dalliance keeps the wrinkles long away:
Repentance follows them that have refused.
To bring you to the knowledge of your good
I seek, I sue. O try, and then believe!
Each image can be chaste that's carved of wood.
You show you live, when men you do relieve.
Iron with wearing shines. Rust wasteth treasure.
On earth, but love there is no other pleasure.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

SINCE there's no help, come let us kiss and part.
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me,
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And, when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes,
Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!

MICHAEL DRAYTON

YOU, best discern'd of my mind's inward eyes,
And yet your graces outwardly divine,
Whose dear remembrance in my bosom lies,
Too rich a relic for so poor a shrine:
You, in whom Nature chose herself to view
When she her own perfection would admire,
Bestowing all her excellence on you;
At whose pure eyes love lights his hallow'd fire.
Even as a man that in some trance hath seen
More than his wondering utterance can unfold,
That, rapt in spirit, in better worlds hath been,
So must your praise distractedly be told;
Most of all short, when I would show you most,
In your perfections so much am I lost.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WHEN, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WHEN to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

LIKE as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

NO longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay;
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

THAT time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THEN hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss:
Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purposed overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come: so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might;
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

FROM you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermillion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WHEN in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

O NEVER say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love: if I have ranged,
Like him that travels, I return again;
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

LET me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WHAT potions have I drunk of Siren tears,
Distill'd from limbeck's foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win!
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
In the distraction of this madding fever!
O benefit of ill! now I find true
That better is by evil still made better;
And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THE expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

POOOR soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Hemm'd by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER, EARL OF STIRLING

AH thou, my love, wilt lose thyself at last,
Who can to match thyself with none agree:
Thou ow'st thy father nephews, and to me
A recompense for all my passions past.
Ah, why shouldst thou thy beauty's treasure waste,
Which will begin for to decay I see?
Erst Daphne did become a barren tree,
Because she was not half so wise as chaste:
And all the fairest things do soonest fade,
Which O, I fear, thou with repentance try;
The roses blasted are, the lilies die,
And all do languish in the summer's shade:
Yet will I grieve to see those flowers fall down,
Which for my temples should have framed a crown.

THOMAS CAMPION

THRICE toss those oaken ashes in the air,
And thrice three times tie up this true love's knot;
Thrice sit you down in this enchanted chair,
And murmur soft "She will or she will not."
Go, burn those poisoned weeds in that blue fire,
This cypress gathered out a dead man's grave,
These screech-owls' feathers and this prickling briar,
That all thy thorny cares an end may have.
Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round:
Dance in a circle, let my love be centre!
Melodiously breathe an enchanted sound:
Melt her hard heart that some remorse may enter!
In vain are all the charms I can devise:
She hath an art to break them with her eyes.

BARNABE BARNES

AH, sweet Content! where is thy mild abode?
Is it with shepherds, and light-hearted swains,
Which sing upon the downs and pipe abroad,
Tending their flocks and cattle on the plains?
Ah, sweet Content! where dost thou safely rest?
In heaven with angels? which the praises sing
Of Him that made, and rules at His behest,
The minds and hearts of every living thing.
Ah, sweet Content! where doth thine harbour hold?
Is it in churches with religious men,
Which please the gods with prayers manifold,
And in their studies meditate it then?
Whether thou dost in heaven or earth appear,
Be where thou wilt, thou wilt not harbour here.

JOHN DONNE

DEATH! be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death! nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep which but thy picture be,
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and souls' delivery.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past we wake eternally;
And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

THE sun is fair when he with crimson crown,
And flaming rubies, leaves his eastern bed;
Fair is Thanmantius in her crystal gown,
When clouds engemm'd hang azure, green, and red:
To western worlds when wearied day goes down,
And from Heaven's windows each star shows her head,
Earth's silent daughter, night, is fair, though brown;
Fair is the moon, though in love's livery cled,
Fair Chloris is when she doth paint April,
Fair are the meads, the woods, the floods are fair;
Fair looketh Ceres with her yellow hair,
And apples' queen when rose-cheek'd she doth smile.
That heaven, and earth, and seas are fair is true,
Yet true that all not please so much as you.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND

THAT I so slenderly set forth my mind,
Writing I wot not what in ragged rhymes,
And charged with brass into these golden times,
When others tower so high, am left behind;
I crave not Phœbus leave his sacred cell
To bind my brows with fresh Aonian bays;
Let them have that who tuning sweetest lays
By Tempe sit, or Aganippe's well;
Nor yet to Venus' tree do I aspire,
Sith she for whom I might affect that praise
My best attempts with cruel words gainsays,
And I seek not that others me admire.
Of weeping myrrh the crown is which I crave,
With a sad cypress to adorn my grave.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND

As, in a dusky and tempestuous night,
A star is wont to spread her locks of gold,
And while her pleasant rays abroad are roll'd,
Some spiteful cloud doth rob us of her sight;
Fair soul, in this black age so shined thou bright,
And made all eyes with wonder thee behold,
Till ugly Death, depriving us of light,
In his grim misty arms thee did enfold.
Who more shall vaunt true beauty here to see?
What hope doth more in any heart remain,
That such perfections shall his reason reign,
If beauty, with thee born, too died with thee?
World, plain no more of Love, nor count his harms;
With his pale trophies Death hath hung his arms.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND

THESE eyes, dear Lord, once tapers of desire,
Frail scouts, betraying what they had to keep,
Which their own heart, then others set on fire,
Their trait'rous black before thee here out-weep;
These locks, of blushing deeds the guilt attire,
Waves curling, wrackful shelves to shadow deep,
Rings wedding souls to sin's lethargic sleep,
To touch thy sacred feet do now aspire.
In seas of care behold a sinking bark,
By winds of sharp remorse unto thee driven,
O, let me not be ruin's aimed-at mark!
My faults confess'd, Lord, say they are forgiven.
Thus sigh'd to Jesus the Bethanian fair,
His tear-wet feet still drying with her hair.

WILLIAM HABINGTON

TO CASTARA

LET the chaste Phoenix from the flowery East,
Bring the sweet treasure of her perfumed nest,
As incense to this Altar, where the name
Of my Castara's graved by the hand of fame.
Let purer Virgins, to redeem the air
From loose infection, bring their zealous prayer,
To assist at this great feast: where they shall see,
What rites Love offers up to Chastity.
Let all the amorous Youth, whose fair desire
Felt never warmth, but from a noble fire,
Bring hither their bright flames: which here shall shine
As Tapers fixt about Castara's shrine.
While I the Priest, my untamed heart surprise,
And in this Temple make 't her sacrifice.

WILLIAM HABINGTON

TO CASTARA

WHAT should we fear, Castara? The cool air,
That 's fall'n in love, and wanton in thy hair,
Will not betray our whispers. Should I steal
A nectar'd kiss, the wind dares not reveal
The pleasure I possess. The wind conspires
To our blest interview, and in our fires
Bathes like a Salamander, and doth sip,
Like Bacchus from the grape, life from thy lip.
Nor think of night's approach. The world's great eye
Though breaking Nature's law, will us supply
With his still flaming lamp: and to obey
Our chaste desires, fix here perpetual day.
But should he set, what rebel night dares rise,
To be subdued t' the victory of thy eyes?

JOHN MILTON

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O NIGHTINGALE, that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love; O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why:
Whether the Muse, or Love, call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

JOHN MILTON

ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”
I fondly ask: but Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need
Either man’s work, or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o’er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

JOHN MILTON

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

METHOUGHT I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the Old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first utter'd from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turn'd to share the transport—Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recall'd thee to my mind—
But how could I forget Thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss?—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

THE world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn:
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frown'd,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakspeare unlock'd his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camoens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glitter'd a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crown'd
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheer'd mild Spenser, call'd from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LONDON, 1802

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

TO A SNOW-DROP

L ONE Flower, hemm'd in with snows and white as they
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snow-drop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

**COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,
SEPTEMBER 3, 1802**

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

THE INFANT M—— M——

UNQUIET Childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower
That neither feeds nor wastes its vital power
In painful struggles. Months each other chase,
And nought untunes that Infant's voice; no trace
Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek;
Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
That one enrapt with gazing on her face
(Which even the placid innocence of death
Could scarcely make more placid, heaven more bright)
Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
The Virgin, as she shone with kindred light;
A nursing couch'd upon her mother's knee,
Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

HARK! 'tis the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest,
By twilight premature of cloud and rain;
Nor does that roaring wind deaden his strain
Who carols thinking of his love and nest,
And seems, as more incited, still more blest.
Thanks; thou hast snapp'd a fire-side Prisoner's chain,
Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in a moment charm'd my cares to rest.
Yes, I will forth, bold Bird! and front the blast,
That we may sing together, if thou wilt,
So loud, so clear, my Partner through life's day,
Mute in her nest love-chosen, if not love-built
Like thine, shall gladden, as in seasons past,
Thrill'd by loose snatches of the social Lay.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY NEAR DOVER,
ON THE DAY OF LANDING

HERE, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls,
that sound
Of bells;—those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore;—
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

MUTABILITY

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whiten'd hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

WINTER

A WRINKLED crabbed man they picture thee,
Old Winter, with a rugged beard as grey
As the long moss upon the apple tree;
Blue-lipt, an ice drop at thy sharp blue nose,
Close muffled up, and on the dreary way
Plodding alone through sleet and drifting snows.
They should have drawn thee by the high-heapt hearth,
Old Winter! seated in thy great arm'd chair,
Watching the children at their Christmas mirth;
Or circled by them as thy lips declare
Some merry jest, or tale of murder dire,
Or troubled spirit that disturbs the night;
Pausing at times to rouse the smouldering fire,
Or taste the old October brown and bright.

CHARLES LAMB

IN Christian world *Mary* the garland wears!
Rebecca sweetens on a Hebrew's ear;
Quakers for pure *Priscilla* are more clear;
And the light Gaul by amorous *Ninon* swears;
Among the lesser lights how *Lucy* shines!
What air of fragrance *Rosamond* throws round!
How like a hymn doth sweet *Cecilia* sound!
Of *Marthas*, and of *Abigails*, few lines
Have bragg'd in verse. Of coarsest household stuff
Should homely *Joan* be fashioned. But can
You *Barbara* resist, or *Marian*?
And is not *Clare* for love excuse enough?
Yet, by my faith in numbers, I profess,
These all than Saxon *Edith* please me less.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

JOHN KEATS

TO G. A. W.

NYMPH of the downward smile and sidelong glance!
In what diviner moments of the day
Art thou most lovely? when gone far astray
Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance?
Or when serenely wandering in a trance
Of sober thought? Or when starting away,
With careless robe, to meet the morning ray,
Thou sparest the flowers in thy mazy dance?
Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
And so remain, because thou listenest:
But thou to please wert nurtured so completely
That I can never tell what mood is best.
I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly
Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

JOHN KEATS

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told,
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

JOHN KEATS

HAPPY is England! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances blent;
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling meant.
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters:
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging:
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,
And float with them about the summer waters.

JOHN KEATS

TO SLEEP

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight!
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embower'd from the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passed day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still lords
Its strength, for darkness burrowing like a mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

JOHN KEATS

HIS LAST SONNET

BRIGHT star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablation round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

LONG time a child, and still a child, when years
Had painted manhood on my cheek, was I;
For yet I lived like one not born to die:
A thriftless prodigal of smiles and tears,
No hope I needed, and I knew no fears,
But sleep, though sweet, is only sleep, and waking
I waked to sleep no more, at once o'ertaking
The vanguard of my age, with all arrears
Of duty on my back. Nor child, nor man,
Nor youth, nor sage, I find my head is grey,
For I have lost the race I never ran:
A rathe December blights my lagging May;
And still I am a child, though I be old,
Time is my debtor for my years untold.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

NOVEMBER

THE mellow year is hastening to its close;
The little birds have almost sung their last,
Their small notes twitter in the dreary blast—
That shrill-piped harbinger of early snows;
The patient beauty of the scentless rose,
Oft with the Morn's hoar crystal quaintly glass'd,
Hangs, a pale mourner for the summer past,
And makes a little summer where it grows:
In the chill sunbeam of the faint brief day
The dusky waters shudder as they shine,
The russet leaves obstruct the straggling way
Of oozy brooks, which no deep banks define,
And the gaunt woods, in ragged, scant array,
Wrap their old limbs with sombre ivy twine.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

HOMER

FAR from the sight of earth, yet bright and plain
As the clear noon-day sun, an "orb of song"
Lovely and bright is seen, amid the throng
Of lesser stars that rise, and wax, and wane,
The transient rulers of the fickle main;
One constant light gleams through the dark and long
And narrow aisle of memory. How strong,
How fortified with all the numerous train
Of truths wert thou, Great Poet of mankind,
Who told'st in verse as mighty as the sea,
And various as the voices of the wind,
The strength of passion rising in the glee
Of battle. Fear was glorified by thee,
And Death is lovely in thy tale enshrin'd.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

THINK upon Death, 'tis good to think of Death,
But better far to think upon the Dead.

Death is a spectre with a bony head,
Or the mere mortal body without breath,
The state foredoom'd of every son of Seth,
Decomposition—dust, or dreamless sleep.
But the dear Dead are they for whom we weep,
For whom I credit all the Bible saith.
Dead is my father, dead is my good mother,
And what on earth have I to do but die?
But if by grace I reach the blessed sky,
I fain would see the same, and not another;
The very father that I used to see,
The mother that has nursed me on her knee.

THOMAS HOOD

LOVE, dearest Lady, such as I would speak,
Lives not within the humour of the eye;—
Not being but an outward phantasy,
That skims the surface of a tinted cheek,—
Else it would wane with beauty, and grow weak,
As if the rose made summer,—and so lie
Amongst the perishable things that die,
Unlike the love that I would give and seek :
Whose health is of no hue—to feel decay
With cheeks' decay, that have a rosy prime.
Love is its own great loveliness alway,
And takes new lustre from the touch of time;
Its bough owns no December and no May,
But bears its blossom into Winter's clime.

THOMAS HOOD

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF SHAKESPEARE

HOW bravely Autumn paints upon the sky
The gorgeous fame of Summer which is fled!
Hues of all flowers, that in their ashes lie,
Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,—
Tulip, and hyacinth, and sweet rose red,—
Like exhalations from the leafy mould,
Look here how honour glorifies the dead,
And warms their scutcheons with a glance of gold!
Such is the memory of poets old,
Who on Parnassus' hill have bloom'd elate;
Now they are laid under their marbles cold,
And turn'd to clay, whereof they were create;
But God Apollo hath them all enroll'd,
And blazon'd on the very clouds of fate!

THOMAS HOOD

DEATH

IT is not death, that—sometime—in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;
That—sometime—these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night:
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal sprite
Be lapp'd in alien clay and laid below;
It is not death to know this,—but to know
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft,—and when grass waves
Over the past-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

SHAKESPEARE

OTHERS abide our question—Thou art free.
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge! For the loftiest hill
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of Mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst walk on earth unguess'd at.—Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

HILAIRE BELLOC

DECEMBER

HOAR Time about the house betakes him slow,
Seeking an entry for his weariness;
And in that dreadful company Distress
And the sad Night with silent footsteps go.
On my poor hearth the brands are scarce aglow,
And in the woods without pale wanderers press;
Where, waning in the pines from less to less,
Mysterious hangs the hornèd moon, and low.

For now December, full of aged care,
Comes in upon the year and weakly grieves,
Mumbling his lost desires and his despair;
And with mad, trembling hand still interweaves
The dank sear flower-stalks tangled in his hair,
While round about him whirl the rotten leaves.

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON

REGRET

I HOLD it now more shameful to forget
Than fearful to remember; if I may
Make choice of pain, my Father, I will pray
That I may suffer rather than regret;
And this dull aching at my heart to-day
Is harder far to bear than when I set
My passionate heart some golden thing to get,
And, as I clasped it, it was torn away.

“The world is fair,” the elder spirit saith,
“The tide flows fast, and on the further shore
Wait consolations and surprises rare.”
But youth still cries, “The love that was my faith
Is broken, and the ruined shrine is bare
And I am all alone for evermore.”

SAMUEL LAMAN BLANCHARD

GAILY and greenly let my seasons run:
And should the war-winds of the world uproot
The sanctities of life, and its sweet fruit
Cast forth as fuel for the fiery sun;
The dews be turned to ice; fair days begun
In peace wear out in pain, and sounds that suit
Despair and discord keep Hope's harpstring mute,
Still let me live as love and life were one:
Still let me turn on earth a childlike gaze
And trust the whispered charities that bring
Tidings of human truth; with inward praise
Watch the weak motion of each common thing,
And find it glorious. Still let me raise
On wintry wrecks an altar to the Spring.

MATHILDE BLIND

SUFFERING

OH ye, all ye, who suffer here below,
Schooled in the baffling mystery of pain,
Who on life's anvil bear the fateful strain,
Wrung as forged iron, hammered blow on blow,
Take counsel with your grief, in that you know
That he who suffers suffers not in vain,
Nay, that it shall be for the whole world's gain,
And wisdom prove the priceless price of woe.

Thus in some new-found land, where no man's feet
Have trod a path, bold voyagers astray
May fall foredone by torturing thirst and heat:
But from the impotent body of defeat
The winners spring who carve a conquering way—
Measured by milestones of their perished clay.

MATHILDE BLIND

THE AGNOSTIC

NOT in the hour of peril, thronged with
Panting to set their heel upon my head;
Or when alone from many wounds I bled
Unflinching beneath Fortune's random blows;
Nor when my shuddering hands were doomed to close
The unshrinking eyelids of the stony dead;—
Not then I missed my God, not then—but said:
“Let me not burden God with all men's woes!”

But when resurgent from the womb of night
Spring's Oriflamme of flowers waves from the Sod;
When peak on flashing Alpine peak is trod
By sunbeams on their missionary flight;
When heaven-kissed Earth laughs, garmented in light;—
That is the hour in which I miss my God.

MATHILDE BLIND

NEW YEAR'S EVE

ANOTHER full-orbed year hath waned to-day,
And set in the irrevocable past,
And headlong whirled along Time's winged blast
My fluttering rose of youth is borne away:
Ah, rose once crimson with the blood of May,
A honeyed haunt where bees would break their fast,
I watch thy scattering petals flee aghast,
And all the flickering rose-lights turning grey.

Poor fool of life! plagued ever with thy vain
Regrets and futile longings! were the years
Not cups o'er-brimming still with gall and tears?
Let go thy puny personal joy and pain!
If youth with all its brief hope disappears
To deathless hope we must be born again.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

TO MANON. DEPRECIATING HER BEAUTY

I LOVE not thy perfection. When I hear
Thy beauty blazoned, and the common tongue
Cheapening with vulgar praise a lip, an ear,
A cheek that I have prayed to;—when among
The loud world's gods my god is noised and sung,
Her wit applauded, even her taste, her dress,
Her each dear hidden marvel lightly flung
At the world's feet and stripped to nakedness—
Then I despise thy beauty utterly,
Crying, "Be these your gods, O Israel!"
And I remember that on such a day
I found thee with eyes bleared and cheeks all pale,
And lips that trembled to a voiceless cry,
And that thy bosom in my bosom lay.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

ON THE SHORTNESS OF TIME

IF I could live without the thought of death,
Forgetful of Time's waste, the soul's decay,
I would not ask for other joy than breath
With light and sound of birds and the sun's ray.
I could sit on untroubled day by day
Watching the grass grow, and the wild flowers range
From blue to yellow and from red to grey
In natural sequence as the seasons change.
I could afford to wait, but for the hurt
Of this dull tick of time which chides my ear.
But now I dare not sit with loins ungirt
And staff unlifted, for Death stands too near.
I must be up and doing—ay, each minute.
The grave gives time for rest when we are in it.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

TO JULIET. FEAR HAS CAST OUT LOVE

'TIS not that love is less or sorrow more
Than in the days when first these things began.
Even then you doubted, and our hearts were sore
And you rebelled because I was a man.
Even then you fought and wrestled with my plan
Of earthly bliss. What bitter anguish too
When at the hour decreed our passion ran
Out of our keeping and love claimed its due.
'Tis not love's fault we part, nor grief's. Alas,
One mightier now compels us with his nod.
The fire of heaven has touched us, and we pass
From pleasure's chastenings to a fiercer rod;
And fear has cast out love, for flesh is grass
And we are withered with the wrath of God.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

FAREWELL TO JULIET

FAREWELL then. It is finished. I forego
With this all right in you, even that of tears.
If I have spoken hardly, it will show
How much I loved you. With you disappears
A glory, a romance of many years.
What you may be henceforth I will not know.
The phantom of your presence on my fears
Is impotent at length for weal or woe.
Your past, your present, all alike must fade
In a new land of dreams, where love is not.
Then kiss me and farewell. The choice is made
And we shall live to see the past forgot,
If not forgiven. See, I came to curse,
Yet stay to bless. I know not which is worse.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

THE VENUS OF MILO

WHAT art thou? Woman? Goddess? Aphrodite?
Yet never such as thou from the cold foam
Of ocean, nor from cloudy heaven might come,
Who wast begotten on her bridal-night
In passionate Earth's womb by Man's delight,
When man was young. I cannot trace in thee
Time's handiwork. Say, rather, where is he
For whom thy face was red which is so white?
Thou standest ravished, broken, and thy face
Is writ with ancient passions. Thou art dumb
To my new love. Yet, whatsoe'er of good,
Of crime, of pride, of passion, or of grace
In woman is, thou, woman, hast in sum!
Earth's archetypal Eve! All Womanhood.

ROBERT BRIDGES

WINTER was not unkind because uncouth;
His prison'd time made me a closer guest,
And gave thy graciousness a warmer zest,
Biting all else with keen and angry tooth:
And bravelier the triumphant blood of youth
Mantling thy cheek its happy home possess,
And sterner sport by day put strength to test,
And custom's feast at night gave tongue to truth.

Or say hath flaunting summer a device
To match our midnight revelry, that rang
With steel and flame along the snow-girt ice?
Or when we hark't to nightingales that sang
On dewy eves in spring, did they entice
To gentler love than winter's icy fang?

ROBERT BRIDGES

O WEARY pilgrims, chanting of your woe,
That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,
Hailing in each the citadel divine
The which ye thought to have enter'd long ago;
Until at length your feeble steps and slow
Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,
And your hearts overburden'd doubt in fine
Whether it be Jerusalem or no:

Dishearten'd pilgrims, I am one of you;
For, having worshipp'd many a barren face,
I scarce now greet the goal I journey'd to:
I stand a pagan in the holy place;
Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue,
And question with the God that I embrace.

ROBERT BRIDGES

world comes not to an end: her city-hives
with the tokens of a changeless trade,
wheel, driver and flagging jade,
kings, children, priests and wives.
are set, as lives on lives;
are overlaid:
by book or blade
by holds and toils and strives.
their fathers taught,
plans; for works depend
on thought, and thought on thought:
the smiles of hope amend
The weariness the same love changed in nought:
In this thing to the world comes not to an end.

ROBERT BRIDGES

I WILL be what God made me, nor protest
Against the bent of genius in my time,
That science of my friends robs all the best,
While I love beauty, and was born to rhyme.
Be they our mighty men, and let me dwell
In shadow among the mighty shades of old,
With love's forsaken palace for my cell;
Whence I look forth and all the world behold.

And say, These better days, in best things worse,
This bastardy of time's magnificence,
Will mend in fashion and throw off the curse,
To crown new love with higher excellence.
Curs'd tho' I be to live my life alone,
My toil is for man's joy, his joy my own.

ROBERT BRIDGES

A H heavenly joy! But who hath ever heard,
Who hath seen joy, or who shall ever find
Joy's language? There is neither speech nor word;
Nought but itself to teach it to mankind.
Scarce in our twenty thousand painful days
We may touch something: but there lives—beyond
The best of art, or nature's kindest phase—
The hope whereof our spirit is fain and fond:

The cause of beauty given to man's desires,
Writ in the expectancy of starry skies,
The faith which gloweth in our fleeting fires,
The aim of all the good that here we prize;
Which but to love, pursue and pray for well
Maketh earth heaven, and to forget it, hell.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE. XXII

WHEN our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curved point,—what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Beloved,—where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE. XXVIII

MY letters! all dead paper, . . mute and white!—
And yet they seem alive and quivering
Against my tremulous hands which loose the string
And let them drop down on my knee to-night.
This said, . . he wished to have me in his sight
Once, as a friend: this fixed a day in spring
To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,
Yet I wept for it! this, . . the paper's light. . .
Said, *Dear, I love thee*; and I sank and quailed
As if God's future thundered on my past.
This said, *I am thine*—and so its ink has paled
With lying at my heart that beat too fast.
And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed,
If, what this said, I dared repeat at last!

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

THE PRISONER

I COUNT the dismal time by months and years,
Since last I felt the green sward under foot,
And the great breath of all things summer-mute
Met mine upon my lips. Now earth appears
As strange to me as dreams of distant spheres,
Or thoughts of Heaven we weep at. Nature's lute
Sounds on behind this door so closely shut,
A strange, wild music to the prisoner's ear,
Dilated by the distance, till the brain
Grows dim with fancies which it feels too fine,
While ever, with a visionary pain,
Past the precluded senses, sweep and shine
Streams, forests, glades,—and many a golden train
Of sunlit hills, transfigured to Divine.

ROBERT BUCHANAN

WE ARE FATHERLESS

I FOUND Thee not by the starved Widow's bed,
Nor in the sick-rooms where my dear ones died;
In Cities vast I hearken'd for Thy tread,
And heard a thousand call Thee, wretched-eyed,
Worn out, and bitter. But the Heavens denied
Their melancholy Maker. From the Dead!
Assurance came, nor answer. Then I fled
Into these wastes, and raised my hands, and cried:
"The seasons pass—the sky is as a pall—
Thin wasted hands on withering hearts we press—
There is no God—in vain we plead and call,
In vain with weary eyes we search and guess—
Like children in an empty house sit all,
Cast-away children, lorn and fatherless."

ROBERT BUCHANAN

WHEN WE ARE ALL ASLEEP

WHEN He returns, and finds all sleeping here—
Some old, some young, some fair, and some not
fair,
Will He stoop down and whisper in each ear
“Awaken!” or for pity’s sake forbear,—
Saying, “How shall I meet their frozen stare
Of wonder, and their eyes so woebegone?
How shall I comfort them in their despair,
If they cry out, ‘Too late! let us sleep on’?”
Perchance He will not wake us up, but when
He sees us look so happy in our rest,
Will murmur, “Poor dead women and dead men!
Dire was their doom, and weary was their quest.
Wherefore awake them unto life again?
Let them sleep on untroubled—it is best.”

ROBERT BUCHANAN

THE CUP OF TEARS

MY God! my God! with passionate appeal,
Pardon I crave for these mad moods of mine,—
Can I remember, with no heart to feel,
The gift of Thy dear Son, the Man Divine—
My God! what agonies of love were Thine,
Sitting alone, forgotten, on Thy height,
Pale, powerless, awful in that Lonely Light,
While 'neath Thy feet the cloudy hyaline
Rain'd blood upon the darkness,—where Thine Own
Held the black Cup of all earth's tears, and cried!
Ev'n then, tho' Thou wert conscious of his groan,
Pale in that Lonely Light Thou didst abide,
Nor dared, even then, tho' shaken on Thy throne,
To reach Thy hand and dash the Cup aside.

ROBERT BUCHANAN

EARTH'S ELDEST BORN

BUT He, the only One of mortal birth
Who raised the Veil and saw the Face behind,
While yet He wander'd footsore on the earth,
Beheld His Father's Eyes—that they were kind;
Here in the dark I grope, confused, purblind;
I have not seen the glory and the peace;
But on the darken'd mirror of the mind
Strange glimmers fall, and shake me till they cease—
Then, wondering, dazzled, on Thy name I call,
And, like a child, reach empty hands and moan,
And broken accents from my wild lips fall,
And I implore Thee in this human tone;—
If such as I can follow Him at all
Into Thy presence, 'tis by love alone.

WILLIAM M. W. CALL

THE HAUNTED SHORE

I WALK'D at sunset by the lonely waves,
When Autumn stood about me, gold and brown ;
I watch'd the great red sun, in clouds, go down,
An orient King, that 'mid his bronzed slaves
Dies, leaning on his sceptre, with his crown.
A hollow moaning from innumerable caves,
In green and glassy darkness sunk below,
Told of some grand and ancient deed of woe,
Of murdered kings that sleep in weltering graves.
Still thro' the sunshine wavering to and fro,
With sails all set, the little vessels glide ;
Mild is the Eve and mild the ebbing Tide,
And yet that hollow moaning will not go,
Nor the old Fears that with the sea abide.

AUBREY DE VERE

THE SUN GOD

I SAW the Master of the Sun. He stood
High in his luminous car, himself more bright;
An archer of immeasurable might:
On his left shoulder hung his quivered load;
Spurned by his Steeds the eastern mountains glowed;
Forward his eager eye, and brow of light
He bent; and, while both hands that arch embowed,
Shaft after shaft pursued the flying Night.
No wings profaned that godlike form: around
His neck high held an ever-moving crowd
Of locks hung glistening: while such perfect sound
Fell from his bowstring, that th' ethereal dome
Thrilled as a dew-drop; and each passing cloud
Expanded, whitening like the ocean foam.

AUSTIN DOBSON

DON QUIXOTE

BEHIND thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack,
Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and fro,
Thy long spear levelled at the unseen foe,
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,
Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack!
To make wiseacredom, both high and low,
Rub purblind eyes, and (having watched thee go)
Dispatch its Dogberrys upon thy track:
Alas! poor Knight! Alas! poor soul possest!
Yet would to-day, when Courtesy grows chill,
And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest,
Some fire of thine might burn within us still!
Ah, would but one might lay his lance in rest,
And charge in earnest . . . were it but a mill.

JULIAN FANE

FAIN would I flee, when thou unkindest art,
From Life—a Fury, frenzied with despair,
To Death, young Death, not armed with any dart,
But crowned with poppies, who is mild and fair:
But when, by late remorsefulness subdued,
Thou look'st contrition on some graceless deed,
And, all with sweet submissive tears bedewed,
Thy penitential eyes for pardon plead—
Then, while thy kind looks kindle the bright air,
And purple earth with paradisaal blooms,
Life, changed to loveliness, looks mild and fair,
And Death, grown terrible, his dart resumes:
What can I name thee but Enchantress still,
Who Life and Death dost beautify at will?

JULIAN FANE

AD MATREM

HOW many a year hath Time, with felon hand,
Filch'd from the sum of my allotted days
(Alas! with no performance that may stand
In warrant of a well-earn'd meed of praise!)
Time hath the forehead of my life belined,
And clipt my youth with his accursed shears,
Hath made companionable Joy unkind,
And taught mine eyes the fellowship of tears;
His false hands falsely have my mind assail'd,
Thence stealing many a secret of sweet pleasure;
But his foil'd fingers nothing have prevail'd,
Against my heart—the casket of my treasure.
My love of thee preserved in its fresh prime,
I, robb'd, left rich; how poor a thief is Time!

JULIAN FANE

AD MATREM

O VISION'D face unutterably fair,
How oft when blackness muffled up the night
And tempest-laden was the surcharged air,
Nor any hope appear'd of starry light,
How often, lucent as the full-faced moon
When suddenly she rends the clouded fleece,
Hath thy sweet influence, like an unhop'd boon,
Turn'd dark to bright, and tempest into peace!
Queen of my night of sorrows hast thou been,
Whose countenance of good all evil mars,
Knowing to crown with hopeful light serene
Earth's darksome vault when most forlorn of stars,
And to convert clouds bodeful of despair
To silver-suited omens good and fair.

RICHARD GARNETT

AGE

I WILL not rail, or grieve when torpid eld
Frosts the slow-journeying blood, for I shall see
The lovelier leaves hang yellow on the tree,
The nimbler brooks in icy fetters held.
Methinks the aged eye that first beheld
The fitful ravage of December wild,
Then knew himself indeed dear Nature's child,
Seeing the common doom, that all compelled.
No kindred we to her beloved broods,
If, dying these, we drew a selfish breath;
But one path travel all her multitudes,
And none dispute the solemn Voice that saith:
"Sun to thy setting; to your autumn, woods;
Stream to thy sea; and man unto thy death!"

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

TWO DAYS. TO V. G.

THAT day we brought our Beautiful One to lie
In the green peace within your gates, he came
To give us greeting, boyish and kind and shy,
And, stricken as we were, we blessed his name:
Yet, like the Creature of Light that had been ours,
Soon of the sweet Earth disinherited;
He too must join, even with the Year's old flowers,
The unanswering generations of the Dead.
So stand we friends to you, who stood our friend
Through him that day; for now through him you know
That, though where love was love is till the end,
Love, turned of death to longing, like a foe,
Strikes: when the ruined heart goes forth to crave
Mercy of the high, austere, un pitying Grave.

LAURENCE HOUSMAN

THE SOUL'S COMPLAINT OF LOVE'S ABSENCE

STRANGE children in my breast thine absence breeds,
Fierce ghosts of love insatiable as fire,
That break my slumber with their hasty greeds,
And rob my spirit of its clear desire.
And where I would not, there they lead my feet;
And what I wish not, therewith feast mine eyes;
Till to make bitter loneliness seem sweet
My thought consents to what my soul denies!

O, dear, pure vision of all love on earth,
Why tarriest thou from me in any land?
Return and rid me of this monstrous birth:
On my racked senses lay thy healing hand!
For, in my dreams, I give my faith the lie,
And shuddering wake and pray lest this be I!

JEAN INGELow

AN ANCIENT CHESS KING

HAPLY some Rajah first in ages gone
Amid his languid ladies finger'd thee,
While a black nightingale, sun-swart as he,
Sang his one wife, love's passionate orison;
Haply thou mayst have pleased old Prester John
Among his pastures, when full royally
He sat in tent, grave shepherds at his knee,
While lamps of balsam winked and glimmered on.
What doest thou here? Thy masters are all dead;
My heart is full of ruth and yearning pain
At sight of thee; O King that hast a crown
Outlasting theirs, and tell'st of greatness fled
Through cloud-hung nights of unabated rain
And murmur of the dark majestic town.

ANDREW LANG

THE ODYSSEY

AS one that for a weary space has lain
Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Ææan isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine,
As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again,
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
And through the music of the languid hours,
They hear like ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

"JULIET AND HER ROMEO"

(WITH MR. DICKSEE'S PICTURE)

TAKE "this of Juliet and her Romeo,"
Dear Heart of mine, for though yon budding sky
Yearns o'er Verona, and so long ago
That kiss was kissed; yet surely Thou and I,
Surely it is, whom morning tears apart,
As ruthless men tear tendrilled ivy down:
Is not Verona warm within thy gown,
And Mantua all the world save where thou art?

O happy grace of lovers of old time,
Living to love like gods, and dead to live
Symbols and saints for us who follow them;
Even bitter Death must sweets to lovers give:
See how they wear their tears for diadem,
Throned on the star of an unshaken rhyme.

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

LETHE

I HAD a dream of Lethe,—of the brink
Of leaden waters, whither strong men bore
Dead, pallid loves; while others, old and sore,
Brought but their tottering selves, in haste to drink.
And, having drunk, they plunged, and seemed to sink
Their load of love or guilt for evermore,
Reaching with radiant brow the sunny shore
That lay beyond, no more to think and think.

Oh, who will give me, chained to Memory's strand,
A draught of Lethe, salt with final tears,
Were it one drop within the hollow hand?
Oh, who will rid me of the wasted years,
The thought of Life's fair structure vainly planned,
And each false hope, that mocking reappears.

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

SUNKEN GOLD

IN dim green depths rot ingot-laden ships,
While gold doubloons that from the drowned hand fell
Lie nestled in the ocean-flower's bell
With Love's old gifts, once kissed by long-drowned lips;
And round some wrought gold cup the sea-grass whips
And hides lost pearls, near pearls still in their shell,
Where sea-weed forests fill each ocean dell,
And seek dim sunlight with their restless tips.

So lie the wasted gifts, the long-lost hopes,
Beneath the now hushed surface of myself,
In lonelier depths than where the diver gropes.
They lie deep, deep; but I at times behold
In doubtful glimpses, on some reefy shelf,
The gleam of irrecoverable gold.

FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

LOVE, DEATH, AND TIME

A H me, dread friends of mine,—Love, Time, and Death:
Sweet Love, who came to me on sheeny wing,
And gave her to my arms—her lips, her breath,
And all her golden ringlets clustering:
And Time, who gathers in the flying years,
He gave me all, but where is all he gave?
He took my love and left me barren tears,
Weary and lone I follow to the grave.
There Death will end this vision half-divine,
Wan Death, who waits in shadow evermore,
And silent, ere he give the sudden sign;
Oh, gently lead me thro' thy narrow door,
Thou gentle Death, thou trustiest friend of mine—
Ah me, for Love—will Death my love restore?

ROBERT, EARL OF LYTTON

EVENING

ALREADY evening! In the duskiest nook
Of yon dusk corner, under the Death's-head,
Between the alembics, thrust this legended,
And iron-bound, and melancholy book,
For I will read no longer. The loud brook
Shelves his sharp light up shallow banks thin-spread;
The slumbrous west grows slowly red, and red:
Up from the ripen'd corn her silver hook
The moon is lifting: and deliciously
Along the warm blue hills the day declines:
The first star brightens while she waits for me,
And round her swelling heart the zone grows tight:
Musing, half-sad, in her soft hair she twines
The white rose, whispering "He will come to-night!"

FIONA MACLEOD (WILLIAM SHARP)

THE UNBORN CHILD

CHILD of no mortal birth, that yet doth live,
Where loiterest thou, O blossom of our joy?
Unsummon'd hence, dost thou, knowing all, forgive?
Thy rainbow-rapture, doth it never cloy?
O exquisite dream, dear child of our desire,
On mounting wings flitt'st thou afar from here?
We cannot reach thee who dost never tire,—
Sweet phantom of delight, appear, appear!
How lovely must thou be, wrought of her womb,
With eyes as proud as hers and face as fair,
And round about thee as a fragrant gloom
The falling twilight of her shadowy hair,
And all the love and passion of thy sire
With hers re-wed in thy white heart of fire!

DAVID M. MAIN

TO A FAVOURITE EVENING RETREAT

O LOVED wild hill-side, that hast been a power
Not less than books, greater than preacher's art,
To heal my wounded spirit, and my heart,
Retune to gentle thoughts, that hour on hour
Must languish in the city, like a flower
In wayside dust, while on the vulgar mart
We squander for scant gold our better part
From morn till eve, in frost, and sun, and shower!
My soul breaks into singing as I haste,
Day's labour ended, towards thy sylvan shrine
Of rustling beech, hawthorn, and eglantine;
And, wandering in thy shade, I dream of thee
As of green pastures 'mid the desert waste,
Wells of sweet water in the bitter sea.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

FIRST AND LAST KISS

THY lips are quiet, and thine eyes are still;
Cold, colourless, and sad thy placid face;
Thy form has only now the statue's grace;
My words wake not thy voice, nor can they fill
Thine eyes with light. Before fate's mighty will,
Our wills must bow; yet for a little space
I sit with thee and death, in this lone place,
And hold thy hands that are so white and chill.

I always loved thee, though thou didst not know;
But well he knew whose wedded love thou wert:
Now thou art dead, I may raise up the fold
That hides thy face, and, o'er thee bending low,
For the first time and last before we part,
Kiss the curved lips—calm, beautiful, and cold!

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

LOVE'S QUEST

LOVE walks with weary feet the upward way,
Love without joy and led by suffering.
Love's unkissed lips have now no song to sing,
Love's eyes are blind and cannot see the day;
Love walks in utter darkness, and I say:
"O, Love, 'tis summer," or, "Behold the spring,"
Or, "Love, 'tis autumn, and leaves withering,"
And "Now it is the winter bleak and gray,"

And still Love heedeth not. "O, Love," I cry,
"Wilt thou not rest? the path is over steep:"
Love answers not, but passeth all things by;
Nor will he stay, for those who laugh or weep.
I follow Love who follows Grief; but lo,
Where the way ends, not Love himself can know.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

NOT THOU BUT I

IT must have been for one of us, my own,
To drink this cup and eat this bitter bread.
Had not my tears upon thy face been shed,
Thy tears had dropped on mine; if I alone
Did not walk now, thy spirit would have known
My loneliness; and did my feet not tread
This weary path and steep, thy feet had bled
For mine, and thy mouth had for mine made moan;

And so it comforts me, yea, not in vain,
To think of thine eternity of sleep;
To know thine eyes are tearless though mine weep:
And when this cup's last bitterness I drain,
One thought shall still its primal sweetness keep,—
Thou hadst the peace and I the undying pain.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

A DREAM

HERE—where last night she came,—even she for
whom

I would so gladly live, or lie down dead,—
Came in the likeness of a Dream, and said
Such words as thrilled this desolate, ghost-thronged room,
I sit alone now, in the absolute gloom.
Ah, surely on her breast was leaned my head!
Ah, surely on my mouth her kiss was shed,
And all my life broke into scent and bloom.

Give thanks, heart, for thy rootless flower of bliss;
Nor think the gods severe, though thus they seem—
Though thou hast much to bear and much to miss—
Whilst thou, through nights and days to be, canst deem
One thing, and that thing veritably this,
Imperishable,—the memory of a Dream.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

SORROW

A CHILD, with mystic eyes and flowing hair,
I saw her first, 'mid flowers that shared her grace;
Though but a boy, I cried, "How fair a face!"
And, coming nearer, told her she was fair.
She faintly smiled, yet did not say "Forbear!"
But seemed to take a pleasure in my praise.
She led my steps through many a leafy place,
And pointed where shy birds and sweet flowers were.

At length we stood upon a brooklet's brink,—
I seem to hear its sources babbling yet,—
She gave me water from her hand to drink,
The while her eyes upon its flow were set.
"Thy name?" I asked; she whispered low, "Regret,"
Then faded, as the sun began to sink.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

BESIDE THE DEAD

SAD seems the room, and strangely still, where lies
Some form now motionless, in which of late
Glad life exulted. Mark the changed estate,
The helpless hands, clasped in such peaceful wise,
The speechless lips, and unbeholding eyes
Which might not look into the eyes of Fate;
And as about the bed you watching wait,
What pleading pity to your spirit cries!

But, surely, yet a sadder thing is this
To look upon Love's face, where Love lies dead,
While all his memories of pain and bliss,
Thorn-crowned and rose-crowned, watch beside the bed.
Sped souls may live again, no man can tell;
But dead Love shall not break Death's awful spell.

ALICE MEYNELL

I TOUCHED the heart that loved me as a player
Touches a lyre; content with my poor skill
No touch save mine knew my beloved (and still
I thought at times: Is there no sweet lost air
Old loves could wake in him, I cannot share?);
Oh, he alone, alone could so fulfil
My thoughts in sound to the measure of my will.
He is gone, and silence takes me unaware.

The songs I knew not he resumes, set free
From my constraining love, alas for me!
His part in our tune goes with him; my part
Is locked in me for ever; I stand as mute
As one with rising music in his heart
Whose fingers stray upon a shattered lute.

ALICE MEYNELL

RENOUNCEMENT

I MUST not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight—
The thought of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.
Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

ERNEST MYERS

MILTON

HE left the upland lawns and serene air
Wherefrom his soul her noble nurture drew,
And reared his helm among the unquiet crew
Battling beneath; the morning radiance rare
Of his young brow amid the tumult there
Grew grim with sulphurous dust and sanguine dew:
Yet through all soilure they who marked him knew
The signs of his life's dayspring, calm and fair.
But when peace came, peace fouler far than war,
And mirth more dissonant than battle's tone,
He, with a scornful sigh of that clear soul,
Back to his mountain clomb, now bleak and froze,
And with the awful Night he dwelt alone,
In darkness, listening to the thunder's roll.

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS

IAMQUE VALE

DIM in the moon wide-weltering Humber flowed;
Shone the rare lights on Humber's reaches low;
And *thou* wert waking where one lone light glowed
Whose love made all my bliss, whose woe my woe.
Borne as on Fate's own stream, from thine abode
I with that tide must journey sad and slow;
In that tall ship on Humber's heaving road
Dream for the night and with the morning go.

Yet thro' this lifelong dimness desolate,
O love, thy star within me fades not so;
On that lone light I gaze, and wondering wait
Since life we lost, if death be ours or no;
Yea, toward thee moving on the flood of Fate,
Dream for the night, but with the morn will go.

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS

A CHILD OF THE AGE

OH for a voice that in a single song
Could quiver with the hopes and moan the fears
And speak the speechless secret of the years,
And rise, and sink, and at the last be strong!
Oh for a trumpet-call to stir the throng
Of doubtful fighting-men, whose eyes and ears
Watch till a banner in the East appears
And the skies ring that have been still so long!
O age of mine, if one could tune for thee
A marching music out of this thy woe!
If one could climb upon a hill and see
Thy gates of promise on the plain below,
And gaze a minute on the bliss to be
And knowing it be satisfied to know!

ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY

O WOMAN whose familiar face I hold
In my most sacred thought as in a shrine,
Who in my memories art become divine—
Dost thou remember now those years of old
When out of all thine own life thou didst mould
This life and breathe thy heart in this of mine,
Winning, for faith in that fair work of thine,
To rest and be in heaven?—Alas, behold!—
Another woman coming after thee
Hath had small pity,—with a wanton kiss
Hath quite consumed my heart and ruined this
The life that was thy work: O Mother, see;
Thou hast lived all in vain, done all amiss;
Come down from heaven again, and die with me!

JOHN PAYNE

SIBYL

THIS is the glamour of the world antique;
The thyme-scents of Hymettus fill the air
And in the grass narcissus-cups are fair.
The full brook wanders through the ferns to seek
The amber haunts of bees and on the peak
Of the soft hill, against the gold-marged sky,
She stands, a dream from out the days gone by.
Entreat her not. Indeed she will not speak.
Her eyes are full of dreams and in her ears
There is the rustle of immortal wings;
And ever and anon the slow breeze bears
The mystic murmur of the song she sings.
Entreat her not: she sees thee not nor hears
Aught but the sights and sounds of bygone Springs.

JOHN PAYNE

FLITTING HOPE

FAIR angel, I have sought thee many a day,
Through many mingling ways of smiles and tears,
And watched thy shadow flutter through the years.
Ay, evermore, the outline cool and grey
Of thy soft pinions on the landscape lay,
Softening the mocking sunlight and the spears
Of the cold silver moon; and still, with ears
Eager and strained, I listened for the sway
Of thy wide wings across the trembling air.
Ah! never to my sight thy presence came,
Nor in the midnight nor the noonday's flame;
But on the ecstasy of my despair,
Worn down to silence, falls the shade the same,
A far faint angel with outfluttering hair.

JOHN PAYNE

OUTSTRETCHED HANDS

IS there no sweetness save of ripened fruit?
Lies all men's gladness in fulfilled desire?
Is no flame blander than fruition's fire,
That with swift flowerage burns away its root?
Life passes by, and still my heart is mute.
Day follows night; and yet the sky no nigher
Leans to my hope. Shall all my days expire
And all my soul grow grey with the pursuit?
Shall life waste alway in this torrid blast
Of unstayed passion? Oh! it cannot be
But that some day the spirit shall have cast
Its slough of lusts, that in some luminous sea
Surely a man's desire shall purged be,
Surely the early peace come back at last.

JOHN PAYNE

TO THE BELOVED DEAD

I CALL upon you "in the collied night,"
When all things sleep and only I, I wake,
Beseeching you to come for pity's sake
And my sad eyes to solace with your sight.
How many a time I've watched the dark grow white,
Expecting still to see the shadow take
Your shape, to hear your voice the silence break,
Your speech renew for me the dead delight!
I will not question you. I will not weep;
I will not seek to strain you to my breast:
Let me but look upon your face in sleep,
But feel your touch, but hear you voice my name,
And you shall go, returning whence you came,
And have again your cold and senseless rest.

JOHN PAYNE

THE LAST OF THE GODS

OF all the Gods, for Love my heart is sore,
For Love, that was so frank and fair a thing,
That had so vague and sweet a voice to sing
To our tired sense. Since to the unknown shore,
With all his glammers, he is gone before,
How shall the world again be glad in Spring,
How shall the earth again with blossoming
Be clad or have delight of Summer more?
And yet, and yet, sad heart, be comforted:
Love, of a truth, is not for ever dead;
He sleepeth but for weariness of woe
And sheer despite of this our world of show
And yet will lift again his lovesome head
And take again his arrows and his bow.

JOHN PAYNE

THE SILVER AGE

IN my hot youth, no flowers beneath our skies
Of daily life and use would serve my turn,
No bluebells nodding in the golden fern,
No violets purple as my lady's eyes,
No roses ruddy as her lips: the prize
For which I longed by earthly mead or burn
Was not to seek, but in the fields etern
It flow' red, the asphodel of Paradise.
But, now that youth is past and age draws on
And the hot blood grows cool for Time's relent.
No more I sigh for blossoms in no land
That ever blew on which the sunlight shone,
But make my shift with that I have in hand,
The flow'rage of the plant of Sad Content.

MARK ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH

MORE THAN TRUTH

NO longer do I know if thou art fair
Or if the truth my vision might disgrace,
Nor do I know if other men would care
To make their sweetest heaven of thy face,
But what to me the words that others speak,
Their thoughts, their laughter, or their foolish gaze?
For hast thou not a herald on my cheek
To tell the coming nearer of thy ways,
And in my veins a stranger blood that flows,
A bell that strikes on pulses of my heart,
Submissive life that proudly comes and goes
Through eyes that burn, and speechless lips that part?
And hast thou not a hidden life in mine,
In thee a soul which none may know for thine?

MARK ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH

LOVE AND WEARINESS

NO idol thou for passion's eager will
To make a holy worship of thy name;
Not thine our praise; remembered not thy claim:
Thy shrine no temple on love's holy hill.
What rules thy life and soul, their wayward skill,
Has not the spell that masters rosy shame,
And tender pride and beauty like a flame
Desirous, one through starry good and ill.

No God with ministers of hope and fate,
He came, but humbly at my heart's low gate
There knocked a languid boy, a beggar maid;
His limbs were wan: her tarnished golden dress
Did match his faded hair. And this she said:
"He is thy Love, and I am Weariness."

MARK ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH

THE WORLD WELL LOST (XVI)

WILL you receive me if I come, the last
Of many pilgrims, to your languid arms?
I came not near you in your brilliant past,
But you had then much less resistless charms.
I loved you as one loves the brightest thing,
I scorned you as one scorns pride recognized,—
Now what I hardly hummed before, I sing!
The world may know you now, how dearly prized!
I am so tired of sunlight, of gold years,
Of sun-paled silks, and rose-leaves, and rose-scent,
That, yearning for your pallor, of your tears
Athirst, I would but follow where you went,
And for your winter, O my friend, my strange
And trivial summer willingly exchange.

MARK ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH

THE WORLD WELL LOST (XVII)

A H! dearest, did we love each other more,
Our greatest loss were nothing to our gain,
And safe at sea, we should behold the shore,
Or on the hill look down upon the plain.
What were our loss? The world and what it can.
The old world left behind or far below,
How easy to forget the rage of man
In our new world where love would have us go.
What were our greatest loss? Old loves, old friends,
The hope of new delights and new desires.
But our love should be love that never ends,
Love always old and new that never tires,
Love that is friendship, friendship that is love,
Love that is utmost, love that is enough.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON

LOVE, DEATH, AND ART

L ORD, give me Love! give me the silent bliss
Of meeting souls, of answering eyes and hands;
The comfort of one heart that understands;
The thrill and rapture of Love's sealing kiss.
Or grant me—lest I weary of all this—
The quiet of Death's unimagined lands,
Wherein the longed-for Tree of Knowledge stands,
Where Thou art, Lord—and the great mysteries.
Nay, let me sing, my God, and I'll forego,
Love's smiling mouth, Death's sweetlier smiling eyes.
Better my life long mourn in glorious woe,
Than love unheard in a mute Paradise—
For no grief, no despair, can quail me long,
While I can make these sweet to me in song.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON

ADAM AND EVE

WHEN Adam fell asleep in Paradise
He made himself a helpmeet as he dreamed;
And lo! she stood before his waking eyes,
And was the woman that his vision seemed.
She knelt beside him there in tender awe
To find the living fountain of her soul,
And so in either's eyes the other saw
The light they missed in Heaven, and knew the goal
Thrice blessed Adam, husband of thine Eve!
She brought thee for her dowry death and shame;
She taught thee one may worship and deceive;
But yet thy dream and she were still the same;
Nor ever in the desert turned thine eyes
Towards Lilith by the brooks of Paradise.

WILLIAM CALDWELL ROSCOE

LIKE a musician that with flying finger
Startles the voice of some new instrument,
And, though he know that in one string are blent
All its extremes of sound, yet still doth linger
Among the lighter threads, fearing to start
The deep soul of that one melodious wire,
Lest it, unanswering, dash his high desire,
And spoil the hopes of his expectant heart;—
Thus, with my mistress oft conversing, I
Stir every lighter theme with careless voice,
Gathering sweet music and celestial joys
From the harmonious soul o'er which I fly;
Yet o'er the one deep master-chord I hover,
And dare not stoop, fearing to tell—I love her.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

REMEMBER

REMEMBER me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day,
You tell me of our future that you plann'd:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

LOVE, that is dead and buried, yesterday
Out of his grave rose up before my face;
No recognition in his look, no trace
Of memory in his eyes dust-dimmed and grey;
While I, remembering, found no word to say,
But felt my quickened heart leap in its place;
Caught afterglow thrown back from long set days,
Caught echoes of all music passed away.
Was this indeed to meet?—I mind me yet
In youth we met when hope and love were quick,
We parted with hope dead but love alive:
I mind me how we parted then heart sick,
Remembering, loving, hopeless, weak to strive:—
Was this to meet? Not so, we have not met.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

MONNA INNOMINATA (XIV)

YOUTH gone, and beauty gone if ever there
Dwelt beauty in so poor a face as this;
Youth gone and beauty, what remains of bliss?
I will not bind fresh roses in my hair,
To shame a cheek at best but little fair,—
Leave youth his roses, who can bear a thorn,—
I will not seek for blossoms anywhere,
Except such common flowers as blow with corn.
Youth gone and beauty gone, what doth remain?
The longing of a heart pent up forlorn,
A silent heart whose silence loves and longs;
The silence of a heart which sang its songs
While youth and beauty made a summer morn,
Silence of love that cannot sing again.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

LOVE ENTHRONED

I MARKED all kindred Powers the heart finds fair:—
Truth, with awed lips; and Hope, with eyes upcast;
And Fame, whose loud wings fan the ashen Past
To signal-fires, Oblivion's flight to scare;
And Youth, with still some single golden hair
Unto his shoulder clinging, since the last
Embrace wherein two sweet arms held him fast;
And Life, still wreathing flowers for Death to wear.

Love's throne was not with these; but far above
All passionate wind of welcome and farewell
He sat in breathless bowers they dream not of;
Though Truth foreknow Love's heart, and Hope foretell,
And Fame be for Love's sake desirable,
And Youth be dear, and Life be sweet to Love.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

HER GIFTS

HIGH grace, the dower of queens; and therewithal
Some wood-born wonder's sweet simplicity;
A glance like water brimming with the sky
Or hyacinth-light where forest-shadows fall;
Such thrilling pallor of cheek as doth enthrall
The heart; a mouth whose passionate forms imply
All music and all silence held thereby;
Deep golden locks, her sovereign coronal;
A round reared neck, meet column of Love's shrine
To cling to when the heart takes sanctuary;
Hands which for ever at Love's bidding be,
And soft-stirred feet still answering to his sign:—
These are her gifts, as tongue may tell them o'er.
Breathe low her name, my soul; for that means more.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

THE DARK GLASS

NOT I myself know all my love for thee:
How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh
To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday?
Shall birth and death, and all dark names that be
As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,
Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray;
And shall my sense pierce love,—the last relay
And ultimate outpost of eternity?

Lo! what am I to Love, the lord of all?
One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand,—
One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest call
And veriest touch of powers primordial
That any hour-girt life may understand.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

LIFE-IN-LOVE

NOT in thy body is thy life at all,
But in this lady's lips and hands and eyes;
Through these she yields thee life that vivifies
What else were sorrow's servant and death's thrall.
Look on thyself without her, and recall
The waste remembrance and forlorn surmise
That lived but in a dead-drawn breath of sighs
O'er vanished hours and hours eventual.

Even so much life hath the poor tress of hair
Which, stored apart, is all love hath to show
For heart-beats and for fire-heats long ago;
Even so much life endures unknown, even where,
'Mid change the changeless night environeth,
Lies all that golden hair undimmed in death.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

SLEEPLESS DREAMS

GIRT in dark growths, yet glimmering with one star,
O night desirous as the nights of youth!
Why should my heart within thy spell, forsooth,
Now beat, as the bride's finger-pulses are
Quickened within the girdling golden bar?
What wings are these that fan my pillow smooth?
And why does Sleep, waved back by Joy and Ruth,
Tread softly round and gaze at me from far?

Nay, night deep-leaved! And would Love feign in thee
Some shadowy palpitating grove that bears
Rest for man's eyes and music for his ears?
O lonely night! art thou not known to me,
A thicket hung with masks of mockery
And watered with the wasteful warmth of tears?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

STILLBORN LOVE

THE hour which might have been yet might not be,
Which man's and woman's heart conceived and bore
Yet whereof life was barren,—on what shore
Bides it the breaking of Time's weary sea?
Bondchild of all consummate joys set free,
It somewhere sighs and serves, and mute before
The house of Love, hears through the echoing door
His hours elect in choral consonancy.

But lo! what wedded souls now hand in hand
Together tread at last the immortal strand
With eyes where burning memory lights love home?
Lo! how the little outcast hour has turned
And leaped to them and in their faces yearned:—
“I am your child: O parents, ye have come!”

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

THE CHOICE

EAT thou and drink; to-morrow thou shalt die.
Surely the earth, that's wise being very old,
Needs not our help. Then loose me, love, and hold
Thy sultry hair up from my face; that I
May pour for thee this golden wine, brim-high,
Till round the glass thy fingers glow like gold.
We'll drown all hours: thy song, while hours are toll'd,
Shall leap, as fountains veil the changing sky.

Now kiss, and think that there are really those,
My own high-bosomed beauty, who increase
Vain gold, vain lore, and yet might choose our way!
Through many years they toil; then on a day
They die not,—for their life was death,—but cease;
And round their narrow lips the mould falls close.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

BODY'S BEAUTY

OF Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
(The witch he loved before the gift of Eve,)
That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And, subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where
Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare?
Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

A SUPERScription

LOOK in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.

Mark me, how still I am! But should there dart
One moment through thy soul the soft surprise
Of that winged Peace which lulls the breath of sighs,—
Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart
Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

NEWBORN DEATH (II)

AND thou, O Life, the lady of all bliss,
With whom, when our first heart beat full and fast,
I wandered till the haunts of men were pass'd,
And in fair places found all bowers amiss
Till only woods and waves might hear our kiss,
While to the winds all thought of Death we cast:—
Ah, Life! and must I have from thee at last
No smile to greet me and no babe but this?

Lo! Love, the child once ours; and Song, whose hair
Blew like a flame and blossomed like a wreath;
And Art, whose eyes were worlds by God found fair:
These o'er the book of Nature mixed their breath
With neck-twined arms, as oft we watched them there;
And did these die that thou mightst bear me Death?

ALEXANDER SMITH

BEAUTY still walketh on the earth and air:
Our present sunsets are as rich in gold
As ere the Iliad's music was out-rolled;
The roses of the Spring are ever fair,
'Mong branches green still ring-doves coo and pair,
And the deep sea still foams its music old.
So, if we are at all divinely souled,
This beauty will unloose our bonds of care.
'Tis pleasant when blue skies are o'er us bending
Within old starry-gated Poesy,
To meet a soul set to no worldly tune,
Like thine, sweet friend! Oh, dearer this to me
Than are the dewy trees, the sun, the moon,
Or noble music with a golden ending.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

TO DR. JOHN BROWN

BYOND the north wind lay the land of old
Where men dwelt blithe and blameless, clothed and fed
With joy's bright raiment and with love's sweet bread,
The whitest flock of earth's maternal fold.
None there might wear about his brows enrolled
A light of lovelier fame than rings your head,
Whose lovesome love of children and the dead
All men give thanks for: I far off behold
A dear dead hand that links us, and a light
The blithest and benignest of the night,
The night of death's sweet sleep, wherein may be
A star to show your spirit in present sight
Some happier island in the Elysian sea
Where Rab may lick the hand of Marjorie.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

A REMINISCENCE

THE rose to the wind has yielded: all its leaves
Lie strewn on the graveyard grass, and all their light
And colour and fragrance leave our sense and sight
Bereft as a man whom bitter time bereaves
Of blossom at once and hope of garnered sheaves,
Of April at once and August. Day to night
Calls wailing, and life to death, and depth to height,
And soul upon soul of man that hears and grieves.

Who knows, though he see the snow-cold blossom shed,
If haply the heart that burned within the rose,
The spirit in sense, the life of life be dead?
If haply the wind that slays with storming snows
Be one with the wind that quickens? Bow thine head,
O Sorrow, and commune with thine heart: who knows?

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

DELIVERANCE (VIA DOLOROSA II)

O DEATH, fair Death, sole comforter and sweet,
Nor Love nor Hope can give such gifts as thine.
Sleep hardly shows us round thy shadowy shrine
What roses hang, what music floats, what feet
Pass and what wings of angels. We repeat
Wild words or mild, disastrous or divine,
Blind prayer, blind imprecation, seeing no sign
Nor hearing aught of thee not faint and fleet
As words of men or snowflakes on the wind.
But if we chide thee, saying "Thou hast sinned, thou hast sinned,
Dark Death, to take so sweet a light away
As shone but late, though shadowed, in our skies,"
We hear thine answer—"Night has given what day
Denied him: darkness hath unsealed his eyes."

EDDINGTON SYMONDS

THOUGHT OF DEATH (XIX)

HE saith, "The world's a stage: I took my seat;
I saw the show; and now 'tis time to rise."
Another saith, "I came with eager eyes
Into life's banquet-hall to drink and eat:
The hour hath struck, when I must shoe my feet,
And gird me for the way that deathward lies."
Another saith, "Life is a bird that flies
From dark through light to darkness, arrowy fleet."
One show; one feast; one flight;—must that be all?
Could we unlearn this longing, could we cry,
"Thanks for our part in life's fair festival!
We know not whence we came, we know not why
We go, nor where; but God is over all!"
It would not then be terrible to die.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

REBUKE me not! I have nor wish nor skill
To alter one hair's breadth in all this house
Of Love, rising with domes so luminous
And air-built galleries on life's topmost hill!
Only I know that fate, chance, years that kill,
Change that transmutes, have aimed their darts at us;
Envyng each lovely shrine and amorous
Reared on earth's soil by man's too passionate will.

Dread thou the moment when these glittering towers,
These adamantine walls and gates of gems,
Shall fade like forms of sun-forsaken cloud;
When dulled by imperceptible chill hours,
The golden spires of our Jerusalems
Shall melt to mist and vanish in night's shroud!

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

STELLA MARIS (XLIII)

AH, might it be that thou, who like the Dawn,
Or Nereid rising from thine own blue sea,
In supple strength and fearless nudity,
With calm wide eyes of azure unwithdrawn,
Bared thy white limbs, and let thy beauty dawn
In moonbeams whiter than the moon for me;
Thou wild as Adria's waves that cradled thee,
Swift as a sleuth-hound, slender as a fawn;—
Ah, might it be that thou, even thou, couldst give
What the soul yearns for; not this passionate feast
Which makes the satiate man go forth a beast!
I crave no life-gift; let the guerdon be
Than thought more frail, than time more fugitive,
So but we blend one moment, thou with me!

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

DEAD LOVE

O LOVE, dear Love, I sit and sing to thee;
And from sere reeds sought in the wintry brake,
Hoarse reeds wherethrough the winds wail mournfully,
And the waves wash, a funeral pipe I make:
For thou art dead, dear Love, and never more
Melodious movements of the breathing spring
Shall thaw thy blood, or spread thy pinions frore,
Or stir thy mute cold throat to carolling.
These reeds shall bloom and rustle to the breath
Of minstrel winds in April; birds shall sweep,
And summer flies shall quiver; but thy death
Is unrelenting as the marble sleep
Which binds Endymion: his eternal swoon
Breaks to no kisses of the passionate moon.

JAMES THOMSON

A RECUSANT

THE Church stands there beyond the orchard-blooms :
How yearningly I gaze upon its spire!
Lifted mysterious through the twilight glooms,
Dissolving in the sunset's golden fire,
Or dim as slender incense morn by morn
Ascending to the blue and open sky.
For ever when my heart feels most forlorn
It murmurs to me with a weary sigh,
How sweet to enter in, to kneel and pray
With all the others whom we love so well!
All disbelief and doubt might pass away,
All peace float to us with its Sabbath bell.
Conscience replies, There is but one good rest,
Whose head is pillowed upon Truth's pure breast.

R. A. THORPE

I ASK one boon of heaven; I have indeed,
And I will tell it thankfully, filled high,
Nor ruffled, as I drank it, with a sigh,
The cup of joy; to love has been my meed,
And to be loved—and ofttimes could I read
In others' hearts with mine a sympathy:
But joy and love beam on us but to die
And foster memory, most bitter weed.
And this has been my bane, to fling behind
One look into the west, where day dwells yet,
Then turn me shivering to the cold night wind
And dream of joys and loves that long have set:
'Tis for this sleepless viper of the mind
I ask one boon of heaven—to forget.

WILLIAM WATSON

TO——, WITH A VOLUME OF VERSE

IF, on these pale and trembling blooms, full soon
The winter of oblivion should descend,
Remember, it was in my summer's noon
I gave you the poor posy, gentle friend.
Remember, how a fickle gust of praise
Ruffled my foliage in that perished time,
And by the after-light of these dead days
Read once again my world-forgotten rhyme.
Say: "Fame his mistress was; he wooed her long,
She toyed with him an hour—and flung him by:
With me alone the memory of his song
Reluctant fades, and hesitates to die."—
Then burn the book, that eyes less kind than those
Vex not the haunted dusk of its repose.

WILLIAM WATSON

THE MODERN SADNESS

OLD Chaucer, the unconquerably young,
Methought thou camest by, and didst incline
An ear to these poor fitful notes of mine,
And didst reprove, albeit with gentle tongue,
A lyre to joyous mood so seldom strung—
So little vowed to laughter or the vine,
Or her that rose a goddess from the brine,
Mother of half the songs the world hath sung.

Blandly arraigning ghost! 'tis all too true,—
A want of joy doth in these strings reside;
Some shade, that troubled not thy clearer day,
Some loss, nor thou nor thy Boccaccio knew.
For thou art of the morning and the May—
I of the autumn and the eventide.

WILLIAM WATSON

ECCE HOMO

THE Cross, the crown of thorns, the anguished eyes,
The cruel wounds unstaunched and bleeding yet—
Ever the same wan form before me set,
All out of tune with the proud, glorying skies!
O, were it not to-day at last more wise
In his immortal greatness to forget
The mortal agony and bloody sweat,
And in his living words the dying cries?
What is to me this show of wounds and death?
To me his death is nought, his life is all!
The one no word of hourly purport saith;
The other, at morn and noon and evenfall,
Rallies me to him with a trumpet's call—
Him, not of Calvary, but of Nazareth.

WILLIAM WATSON

NIGHTMARE

**(WRITTEN DURING APPARENT IMMINENCE OF
WAR)**

IN a false dream I saw the Foe prevail.
The war was ended; the last smoke had rolled
Away: and we, erewhile the strong and bold,
Stood broken, humbled, withered, weak and pale,
And moan'd, "Our greatness is become a tale
To tell our children's babes when we are old.
They shall put by their playthings to be told
How England once, before the years of bale,
Throned above trembling, puissant, grandiose, calm,
Held Asia's richest jewel in her palm;
And with unnumbered isles barbaric, she
The broad hem of her glistening robe impearl'd;
Then, when she wound her arms about the world,
And had for vassal the obsequious sea."

WILLIAM WATSON

THE KNELL OF CHIVALRY

O VANISHED morn of crimson and of gold,
O youth and roselight and romance, wherein
I read of paynim and of paladin,
And Beauty snatched from ogre's dungeoned hold!
Ever the recreant, then, in dust was rolled,
Ever the true knight in the joust did win,
Ever the scaly shape of monstrous Sin
At last lay vanquished, fold on writhing fold.
Was it all false, that world of princely deeds,
The splendid quest, the good fight ringing clear?
Yonder the Dragon ramps with fiery gorge,
Yonder the victim faints and gasps and bleeds;
But in his merry England our St. George
Sleeps a base sleep beside his idle spear.

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

THE TEMPTATION

THE SLEEPLESS NIGHT AFTER THE WALTZ AT THE VENETIAN REVELS

WHEN hope lies dead—ah, when 'tis death to live,
And wrongs remembered make the heart still bleed,
Better are Sleep's kind lies for Life's blind need
Than truth, if lies a little peace can give.
A little peace! 'tis thy prerogative,
O Sleep! to lend it; thine to quell or feed
This love that starves—this starving soul's long greed,
And bid Regret, the queen of hell, forgive.
Yon moon that mocks me thro' the uncurtained glass
Recalls that other night, that other moon,—
Two English lovers on a grey lagoon,—
The voices from the lantern'd gondolas,
The kiss, the breath, the flashing eyes, and, soon,
The throbbing stillness: all the heaven that was.

THEODORE WATTS DUNTON

IN A GRAVEYARD

OLIVER MADOX BROWN

NOVEMBER 12, 1874

FAREWELL to thee, and to our dreams farewell—
Dreams of high deeds and golden days of thine,
Where once again should Art's twin powers combine—
The painter's wizard-wand, the poet's spell!
Though Death strikes free, careless of Heaven and Hell—
Careless of Man, of Love's most lovely shrine;
Yet must Man speak—must ask of Heaven a sign
That this wild world is God's, and all is well.
Last night we mourned thee, cursing eyeless Death,
Who, sparing sons of Baal and Ashtoreth,
Must needs slay thee, with all the world to slay;
But round this grave the winds of winter say:
"On earth what hath the poet? An alien breath.
Night holds the keys that ope the doors of Day."

OSCAR WILDE

MADONNA MIA

A LILY-GIRL, not made for this world's pain,
With brown, soft hair close braided by her ears,
And longing eyes half veiled by slumberous tears
Like bluest water seen through mists of rain:
Pale cheeks whereon no love hath left its stain,
Red underlip drawn in for fear of love,
And white throat, whiter than the silvered dove,
Through whose wan marble creeps one purple vein.
Yet, though my lips shall praise her without cease,
Even to kiss her feet I am not bold,
Being o'ershadowed by the wings of awe.
Like Dante, when he stood with Beatrice
Beneath the flaming Lion's breast and saw
The seventh Crystal, and the Stair of Gold.

OSCAR WILDE

THE GRAVE OF KEATS

RID of the world's injustice, and his pain,
He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue:
Taken from life when life and love were new
The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,
Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain.
No cypress shades his grave, no funeral yew,
But gentle violets weeping with the dew
Weave on his bones an ever-blossoming chain.
O proudest heart that broke for misery!
O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene!
O poet-painter of our English Land!
Thy name was writ in water—it shall stand:
And tears like mine will keep thy memory green,
As Isabella did her Basil-Tree.

OSCAR WILDE

PHÈDRE

(IMPRESSIONS DU THÉÂTRE)

HOW vain and dull this common world must seem
To such a One as thou, who shouldst have talked
At Florence with Mirandola, or walked
Through the cool olives of the Academe:
Thou shouldst have gathered reeds from a green stream
For Goat-foot Pan's shrill piping, and have played
With the white girls in that Phæacian glade
Where grave Odysseus wakened from his dream.

Ah! surely once some urn of Attic clay
Held thy wan dust, and thou hast come again
Back to this common world so dull and vain,
For thou wert weary of the sunless day,
The heavy fields of scentless asphodel,
The loveless lips with which men kiss in Hell.

JAMES C. WOODS

THE SOUL STITHY

MY soul, asleep between its body-throes,
Mid leagues of darkness watched a furnace glare,
And breastless arms that wrought laborious there,—
Power without plan, wherefrom no purpose grows,—
Welding white metal on a forge with blows,
Whence streamed the singing sparks like flaming hair,
Which whirling gusts ever abroad would bear:
And still the stithy hammers fell and rose.

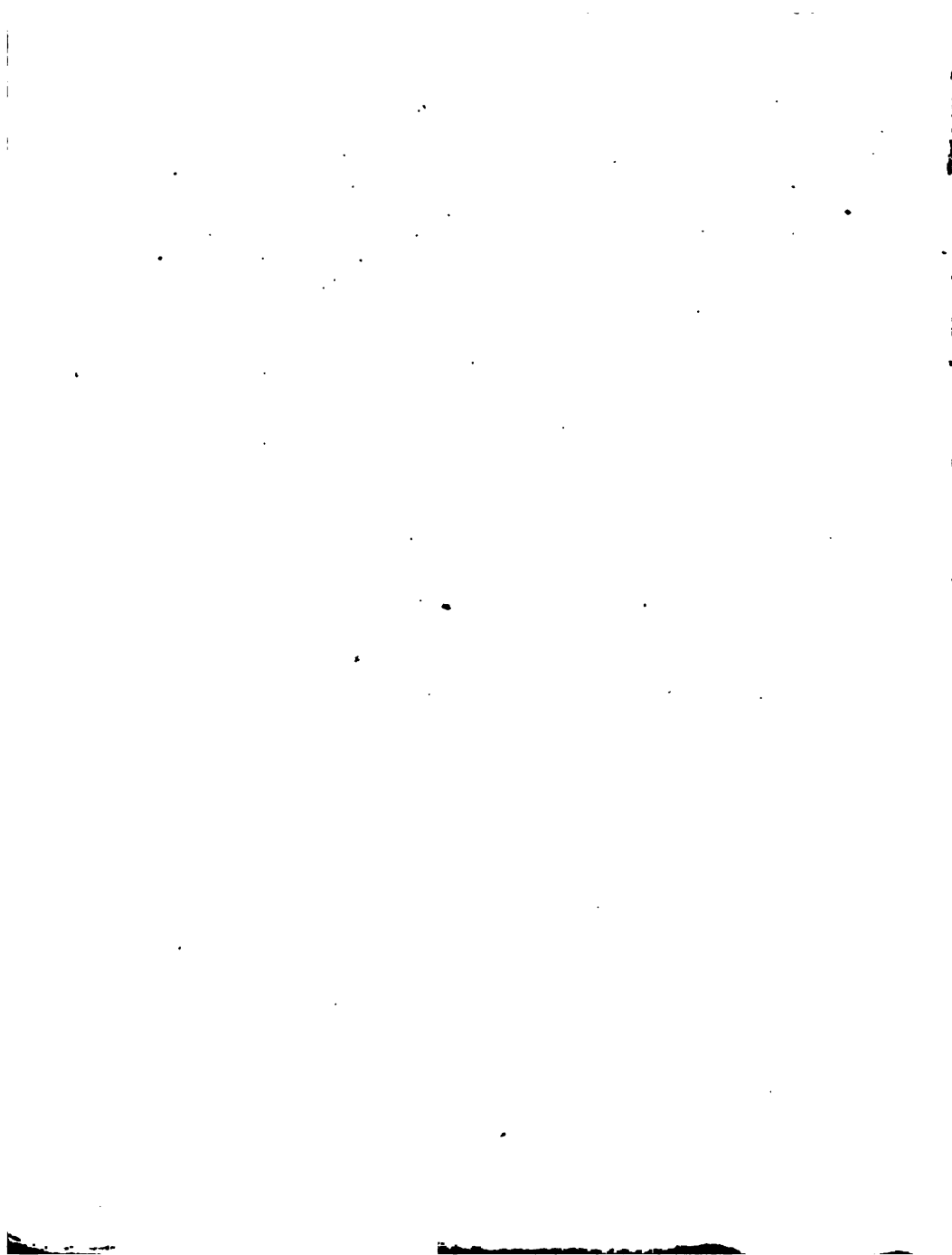
And then I knew those sparks were souls of men,
And watched them driven like stars before the wind.
A myriad died and left no trace to tell;
An hour like will-o'-the-wisps some lit the fen;
Now one would leave a trail of fire behind:
And still the stithy hammers rose and fell.

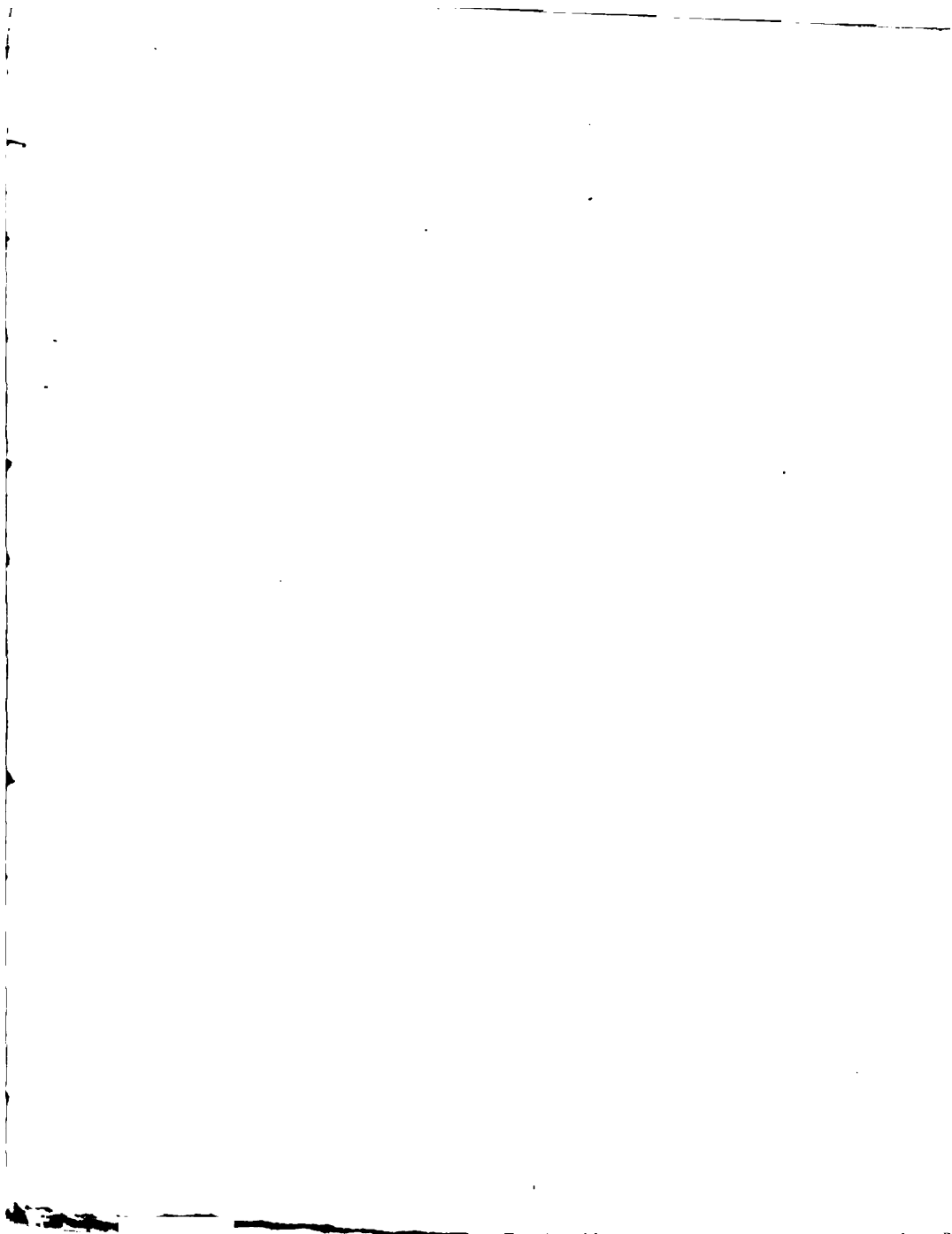
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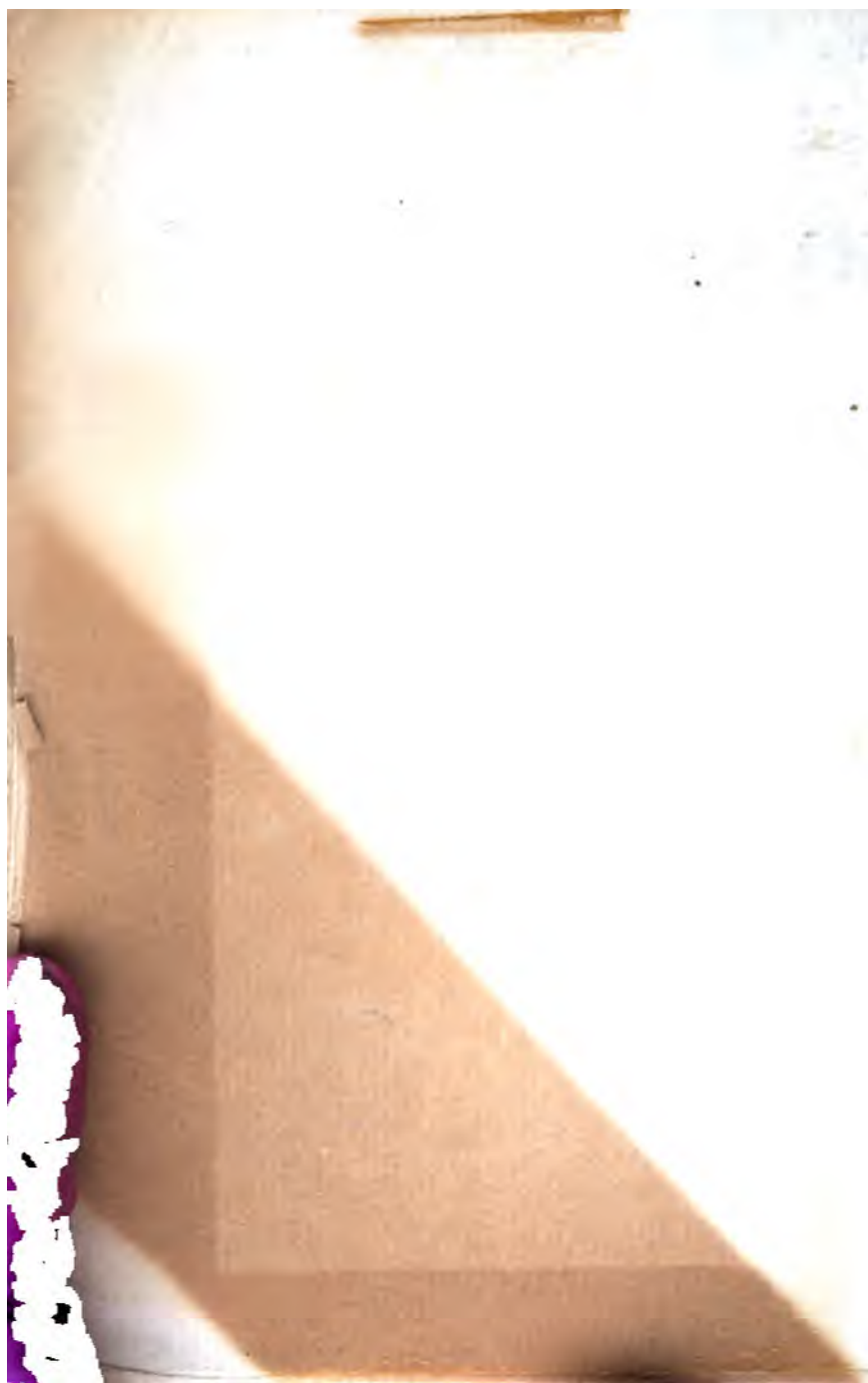












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